



Briefing Note

Mobile Phones in School

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Briefing Note for DSLs: DfE Mobile Phones in Schools (2026)

Purpose of the Guidance

This publication provides guidance to individual schools and Trusts on how to implement a policy that prohibits the use of mobile phones throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.

This non-statutory guidance should be considered alongside the [behaviour in schools guidance](#) which supports schools in establishing calm, safe and supportive environments conducive to teaching, and keeping children safe in education. This guidance should not be taken as a complete or definitive statement of the law nor as a substitute for the relevant legislation.

The aim is to improve behaviour, reduce distraction, and support pupil wellbeing.

Schools should implement the guidance from April 2026.

Although this is not safeguarding guidance, it has direct implications for safeguarding practice, particularly around online safety, peer relationships, and staff responses to incidents involving digital devices. There is also an expectation that staff will support the policy by also having clear guidance in their Staff Behaviour Policy/Code of Conduct around the expectations of using their mobile phones on the school site.

Key Points

There is an expectation that this is a whole-School Mobile Phone Ban and that:

- Applies to all pupils during the school day.
- Schools can choose their approach (e.g., phones handed in, kept in bags, or locked away).
- Consistency and clarity are essential to avoid escalation or conflict.

There is a key emphasis on using the ban to reduce opportunities for using mobile phones for unacceptable and harmful behaviour including:

- Online bullying
- Sharing of inappropriate images
- Accessing harmful content
- Filming staff or pupils without consent

However, it is imperative that even with this ban there continue to be opportunities through the online safety education and curriculum to address out-of-school risks, which remain significant.

Schools must continue to use the Searching, Screening & Confiscation statutory guidance when searching and confiscating devices. DSLs must continue to deliver training to staff to ensure they know:

- When a search is lawful
- How to respond if harmful content is found
- When to involve police or children's social care
- Any safeguarding concerns must be recorded and escalated.

There may need to be some reasonable adaptations for vulnerable pupils, including:

- Young carers
- Pupils with medical needs
- SEND pupils using assistive technology

DSLs must lead on ALL pupil risk assessments, ensuring decisions are documented, proportionate, and regularly reviewed and shared with all relevant staff.

In order for the Policy to be effective and supported by all stakeholders, parent communication is key and parents must understand:

- The school's expectations
- How to contact the school in emergencies
- Why direct contact with pupils during the day is not appropriate
- Why this decision will keep their child safe from additional harmful behaviour or content.
- That by sending their child into school they are in agreement with the school's expectations.

Key Actions for DSLs

DSL's need to ensure that the following school policies are updated to reflect the above changes:

- Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Alignment with KCSIE (2025) and Searching, Screening and Confiscation.

DSLs need to ensure appropriate training is given to all staff on

- Managing mobile phone incidents
- Supporting children exposed to harmful content
- Recording and reporting concerns
- Understanding exceptions and reasonable adjustments for vulnerable pupils

DSLs need to ensure that through an effective curriculum support and teaching is provided for all pupils on online safety including:

- Respectful online behaviour
- Sexting and image sharing
- Digital boundaries
- Managing peer pressure
- Reinforcing that online harm outside school is still a safeguarding concern and pupils should inform a safe adult.

DSLs continued role in this implementation will be to:

- Track any patterns of mobile-related safeguarding incidents, supporting pupils in achieving positive outcomes and staying safe.
- Identify pupils who may need additional support and putting a package of support in place (either through school-based intervention or external support).
- Report trends to SLT and governors to inform any necessary changes to policy and practice that will keep the policy live and effective.

Please see the below link for more information

[Mobile phones in schools - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/mobile-phones-in-schools)

At HH:SM we will be adding this information into the CP Policy and Artificial Intelligence and sharing with all customers ahead of April 2026.